

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, SOUTHERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)
v.) CRIMINAL ACTION NO.
)
LASHONDA PATRICE JONES) 1:08cr236-MHT
)
) (WO)
)

OPINION AND ORDER

This case is before the court on defendant Lashonda Patrice Jones's motion to continue the trial now set for May 4, 2009. For the reasons set forth below, the motion will be granted.

While the granting of a continuance is left to the sound discretion of the trial judge, United States v. Stitzer, 785 F.2d 1506, 1516 (11th Cir. 1986), the court is limited by the requirements of the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161. The Act provides in part:

"In any case in which a plea of not guilty is entered, the trial of a defendant charged in an information or indictment with the commission of

an offense shall commence within seventy days from the filing date (and making public) of the information or indictment, or from the date the defendant has appeared before a judicial officer of the court in which such charge is pending, whichever date last occurs."

§ 3161(c)(1). The Act excludes from the 70-day period any continuance based on "findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial." § 3161(h)(7)(A). In granting such a continuance, the court shall consider, among other factors, whether the failure to grant the continuance would "result in a miscarriage of justice," § 3161(h)(7)(B)(i), or "would deny counsel for the defendant or the attorney for the Government the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking into account the exercise of due diligence." § 3161(h)(7)(B)(iv).

The court concludes that, in this case, the ends of justice served by granting a continuance outweigh the interest of the public and Jones in a speedy trial. Jones's recently retained counsel needs additional time to review the voluminous discovery in order to prepare the case. This court's decision to grant a continuance is buttressed by the fact that the government does not oppose the continuance.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED as follows:

(1) Defendant Lashonda Patrice Jones's motion for continuance (Doc. No. 222) is granted.

(2) The jury selection and trial, now set for May 4, 2009, are reset for August 31, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the federal courthouse, 100 West Troy Street, Dothan, Alabama.

DONE, this the 24th day of April, 2009.

/s/ Myron H. Thompson
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE